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Anticipating Advent

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Anticipating Advent

Abstract

"Consider how our lives might reflect a patient optimism for righteousness to prevail in our lives and for salvation to be our destiny."

Posting about anticipation grounded in faith from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/anticipating-advent/>

Keywords

In All Things, lectionary, Advent, expectation, Christmas, righteousness

Disciplines

Christianity

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service](#) at Dordt College.

Anticipating Advent

 inallthings.org/anticipating-advent/

Douglas De Boer

December 1,
2016

Daily Scripture Readings

[Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19](#)

[Isaiah 4:2-6](#)

[Acts 1:12-17, 21-26](#)

Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.-Psalm 72: 1-7, 18-19

From my pre-school and early elementary school years, I remember that I really looked forward to Christmas. I recall riding in the car with my parents downtown, parking on the curb, and walking the main street to see the newly-decorated light-poles. The stores' display windows were Christmas-themed in red and green and white. One store always set up an electric train that ran through a tunnel and past a Norman Rockwell-like village scene. I would stand on tip-toes to watch that display over the windowsill. I loved the moment that the train would come racing around the corner as if to run right into my face, then turn aside at the last minute. To my young ears, the songs on the radio seemed really happy and refreshing. I even got to sit on Santa's lap and tell him what I wished for Christmas. The Christmas tradition was working for me!

By about fifth grade, I had somehow detected that it was pretty uncool to show such visible excitement about Christmas. I had learned by then that Santa's "elf" usually closed out the visit by handing my folks a note suggesting what to purchase for me. And by the time that I reached high school, the whole season seemed a gaudy fraud. Sure, I still looked forward to gifts, but in the wisdom of youth I found the whole thing to be a disgusting mess of secular traditions making inroads into Christianity.

Now, I'm "all grown-up" – maybe – and here we go again, embarking on another Advent season. I look back with a bit of humor on my youthful, innocent enjoyment of my gifts and decorations. I smile at my youthfully-earnest concern with the secular origins of North American Christmas traditions. And now I'm somewhere in-between. Yes, it's nice to see some Christmas decorations, especially as some of them actually do remind me of Christ's birth. But the music on the radio and all the advertising also amazes me with the degree of kitsch to which it can descend at times. Maybe I've got some genes from Ebenezer Scrooge. Sometimes, I feel like mumbling "bah humbug" at this time of year.

Do nations go through similar stages in anticipating good events? Here in the USA, we are just finishing an election season. What were we looking for in the politicians that we could choose to vote for, or against? Was there an era in our history when citizens, with child-like faith and eagerness, generally looked forward to a new president, or senator, or city councilmember, or court judge, as each voter walked expectantly into the voting booth? As our nation has aged, have we as a citizenry taken a more sophisticated, possibly more jaded, view of voting? (We wonder, "Is

it rigged?”) Have we given up on looking forward to righteousness, whatever that is? How should we anticipate the future?

Israel, in Biblical times, also went through various stages of anticipation. At one time, like children, they eagerly anticipated a king. “Give us a king to lead us,” they said (Samuel 8:6). And perhaps it was later, during the exile, that the anticipation became more grounded in faith. “I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my Salvation” (Micah 7:7).

Consider how we should direct our expectation this Advent season. Be amazed with me at how well the Psalmist anticipated Advent. Consider how our lives might reflect a patient optimism for righteousness to prevail in our lives and for salvation to be our destiny. Let us live in that expectation this Advent season.